

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 COA-02 IO-14 CG-00 JUSE-00

TRSE-00 OMB-01 DOTE-00 FMC-04 INT-08 AGR-20 EB-11

COME-00 SWF-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 EA-11 DRC-01 /189 W
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R 131535Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7870

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PINT, IN

SUBJECT: LOS: INDIA, A CONTIGUOUS ZONE, AND COASTAL SMUGGLING

REF: (A) BANGKOK 904; (B) BOMBAY 1295, MADRAS 714, CALCUTTA
1136 (NOTAL)

1. WHEN THE LOS TEAM RECENTLY VISITED DELHI, MEA LEGAL ADVISOR JAGOTA STRESSED INDIA'S NEED FOR A NARROW CONTIGUOUS ZONE BEYOND THE TWELVE-MILE TERRITORIAL SEA TO COMBAT A SERIOUS SMUGGLING PROBLEM FROM BOATS ANCHORED JUST OUTSIDE THE TWELVE-MILE LIMIT. THE ALTERNATIVE FOR INDIA, JAGOTA SAID, MIGHT BE TO EXTEND ITS TERRITORIAL SEA. IN RECOMMENDING REVIEW OF THIS ISSUE, THE LOS TEAM OBSERVED INDIA APPEARED TO BE SERIOUS; THIS WAS NOT MERELY JAGOTA SPEAKING, AND IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO DISCOUNT HIS REMARKS (REF A). WE AGREE.

2. REPORTS FROM OUR CONSULATES INDICATE THAT COASTAL SMUGGLING
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IS INDEED A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM FOR INDIA. SMUGGLING IS BIG

BUSINESS, AND IT GIVES AN ENORMOUS BOOST TO BLACK MONEY AND CONTRIBUTES TO A LOSS OF TAX REVENUES AND INFLATION. THE FLOW OF SMUGGLED GOODS INTO INDIA HAS BEEN ESTIMATED AT UP TO HALF A BILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY. WHILE THIS ESTIMATE MAY BE HIGH, IT ILLUSTRATES THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM.

3. THE PERSIAN GULF, PRINCIPALLY DUBAI AND ABHU DHABI, IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TRANSSHIPMENT POINT FOR INDIAN SMUGGLING. INCOMING OODS INCLUDE YARNS, LUXURY AND CONSUMER ITEMS SUCH AS WRISTWATCHES, AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT. OUTGOING ARE SILVER, ANTIQUES, FOODGRAINS AND OILS, AND PEOPLE, AS WELL AS A SMALL AMOUNT OF NARCOTICS.

4. IN INDIA, THE PRINCIPAL POINTS OF ENTRY ARE ALONG THE WEST COAST WITH PRIDE OF PLACE GOING TO THE OLD PORTUGUESE ENCLAVE DAMAN, NORTH OF BOMBAY. GOODS ARE BROUGHT OVER FROM DUBAI AND OTHER GULF PORTS IN CARGO SHIPS THAT ANCHOR JUST OUTSIDE INDIA'S TERRITORIAL WATERS AND TRANSFER TO MERCHANDISE TO SMALL, OFTEN HIGHLY POWERED CRAFT THAT MAKE THE DASH FOR SHORE. THERE APPEARS AS WELL TO BE SMUGGLING FROM REGULAR CARGO SHIPS STANDING IN THE HIGH SEAS AWAITING BERTHS IN HARBORS; THESE PASS SMALL QUANTITIES OF GOODS TO FISHING CRAFT DESTINED FOR POINTS ASHORE.

5. THE INDIAN AUTHORITIES SEEM TO BE AT SOME DISADVANTAGE IN ATTEMPTING TO CONTROL THE SMUGGLING. THEY HAVE RELATIVELY FEW MECHANIZED BOATS, AND WHAT THEY HAVE IS OFTEN INFERIOR TO WHAT IS AT THE SMUGGLERS' COMMAND. THEIR MAJOR POINT OF ENFORCEMENT IS WHERE THE GOODS ARE TRANSFERRED FROM BOATS TO TRUCKS. INDIAN NAVY SHIPS TRY TO MONITOR THE TRANSFERS AT SEA ELECTRONICALLY AND ALERT CUSTOMS OFFICIALS WHEN THE BOATS MAKE THEIR DASH TO SHORE. THERE IS SOME--PERHAPS CONSIDERABLE--COLLUSION WITH OFFICIALS AND PAYOFFS, PARTICULARLY IN THE BOMBAY AREA: THEY SAY IN BOMBAY--YOU CAN ALWAYS BE SURE OF DELIVERY IF YOU DEAL WITH A REPUTABLE SMUGGLER.

6. WE WILL FOLLOW UP WITH A MORE DETAILED REPORT IN A FEW WEEKS.
MOYNIHAN

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